THE CHILLING ARCHIVES OF HORROR COMICS!™

HAUNTED HORROR™

#15

BERNARD BAILY

MADAM CLIZIA

GOOD GREIVENING TO YOU, *FRIGHT FANS!* I HAVE FOR YOU *BOILS* AND *GHOULS* A *HEX-TRA SPECIAL ISSUE* OF PETRIFYING PULP DUG FROM MY *MUSTY MORTUARY!* YOU ARE ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE *SENSE-SHATTERING TERROR TALES* THAT WILL MAKE YOU SCREAM YOUR *HEAD OFF!* DESCEND DOWN THE *DANK DUNGEON* NOW FOR THE HORRIBLE, HEINOUS, *HAUNTED HORROR* THAT AWAITS!

Art by
Drazen Kozjan

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NIGHTMARE COME TRUE

EVER WAKE UP SWEATING AFTER A NIGHTMARE? REMEMBER THE COLD TERROR, THE FROZEN PANIC, THE SCREAM THAT WOULDN'T COME OUT? BAD ENOUGH! BUT **YOU** ALWAYS WOKE UP! THEN PITY POOR GEORGE MARSH, THE MAN WHO DREAMED MONSTERS...

MAYBE THESE PILLS WILL MAKE ME SLEEP! ANYTHING IS BETTER THAN DREAMING ABOUT THOSE — UGH — MONSTERS!

GEORGE, A GROCERY CLERK IN A SMALL TOWN, BEGINS TO WORRY ABOUT HIS NIGHTMARES...

I'M GOING CRAZY! IF I DREAM AGAIN TONIGHT, I'LL SEE A DOCTOR!

Journey Into Fear #9, September 1952. Art: Iger Shop. Publisher: Superior.

YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK, GEORGE!!

GEORGE! WAKE UP, GEORGE! IT'S ME— YOUR OLD PAL! HAH—HAH—HAH!

NO! OHH—GO AWAY! AHHHHH— YOU'RE ONLY A NIGHTMARE!

A NIGHTMARE, AM I? HAH! I'LL SHOW YOU! WAKE UP, YOU FOOL! YOU'LL SEE HOW REAL I AM!

HUH? Y—YOU CAN'T BE REAL!

I'LL RIP YOUR THROAT OUT! AHHHHHHH—

NO! HELP!

GEORGE REALIZES THAT HE IS AWAKE...

Y—YOU ARE REAL! HELP! LEMME OUT OF HERE! HELP!

NO ONE CAN HELP YOU, GEORGE! NOT IN THIS WORLD!

I'LL KILL MYSELF! AAAHHHHHH—

HAL'S FISH CO.

DAVE'S HA
THE BEST
THE MARKE

STILL NO LUCK, GEORGE!

A SUICIDE! LUCKY THING THAT AWNING WAS THERE!

GAAAAAA—

THE MONSTER! IN MY ROOM! DON'T LET IT GET ME, OFFICER! SAVE ME!

OHHH!

YOU GOT THEM BAD, BUDDY! I BETTER TAKE YOU ALONG!

LATER AT THE PRISON HOSPITAL...

HMMM—WORSE CASE OF D.T.'S I'VE SEEN IN YEARS!

SEE FOR YOURSELF, DOC! HE'S A REAL NUT!

YEAH—KEEPS YELLING ABOUT MONSTERS! CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING?

AHHHH—HELP! DON'T LET IT GET ME!

PERHAPS HYPNOSIS WILL WORK! I'VE BEEN USING IT LATELY! IF I CAN PUT HIM TO SLEEP...

GO TO SLEEP NOW! CLOSE YOUR EYES! SLEEP! YOU ARE DRIFTING INTO QUIET SLEEP! YOU WILL BE ALL RIGHT! JUST SL-E-EP...

UHHH—S-SLEEP! NIGHTMARES! REAL M-MONSTERS. UHHHHHH...

GEE, DOC—YOU'RE GOOD!

YEAH—HE DROPPED OFF LIKE A BABY!

SURPRISED ME, TOO! IT WAS ALMOST TOO EASY!

ON THE CHILL DARK HOURS OF THE DAWN...

UGHHH — N-NO! NOT AGAIN! G-GO AWAY! L-LEAVE ME ALONE!

FOR ONCE YOU'RE SAFE, GEORGE! SO DEEP IN HYPNOSIS YOU CAN'T WAKE UP TO NEW TERROR...

BUT THAT CRAZY BRAIN OF YOURS CAN'T STOP...

DREAMING NEW AND HORRIBLE MONSTERS...

HUH! I MUST BE DREAMING!

RUN, MIKE! HELP!

GAAAAAA—

AS GEORGE'S SICK MIND CONTINUES TO POUR OUT A SICKENING STREAM OF MONSTERS...

HELP! I'M GOING CRAZY!

THE WORLD'S COMING TO AN END!

RUN! WE GOT TO EVACUTE THE TOWN!

HELP! OHHHHHHH—

HERE, KITTY! NICE LITTLE PUSSY CAT! HERE, KITTY...

HORRIBLE DEATH ROAMS THE CITY AND ONLY ONE MAN KNOWS WHY...

I MAY BE CRAZY, TOO—BUT IT'S A CHANCE! THAT MAN WE THOUGHT WAS A DRUNK! INCREDIBLE—BUT THERE *CAN'T* BE ANY OTHER ANSWER!

HE KEPT BABBLING ABOUT MONSTERS! *HEY!*—ALMOST GOT ME!

HE MUST BE IN HERE SOMEWHERE! HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST INCREDIBLE MATERIALIZATION OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA IN HISTORY!

POLICE

AND IN THE RUINS, GEORGE MARSH STILL SLEEPS...

AHHH, A FOOL WHO KNOWS OUR LITTLE SECRET! COME TO DESTROY US ALL!

I WAS RIGHT! HE— HE'S REALLY DREAMED ALL THESE CREATURES INTO EXISTENCE!

HAH—HAH— AS LONG AS GEORGE LIVES WE LIVE! YOU DIE!

THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW!

THE DOCTOR FIRES ONE SHOT...

ONLY ONE THING TO DO— THIS!

AGHHHHH—RRRRRR-

IT WORKED! THE OTHERS SHOULD BE DEAD, TOO!

THE TERROR IS OVER...

THAT'S THAT! NOW WE CAN START BUILDING A NEW TOWN! UGH— I CAN STILL HARDLY BELIEVE IT!

POOR DEVIL! WHEN I SHOT HIM, THE MONSTERS DIED TOO! HE LOOKS HAPPY— ALMOST AS THOUGH HE WERE THANKING ME!

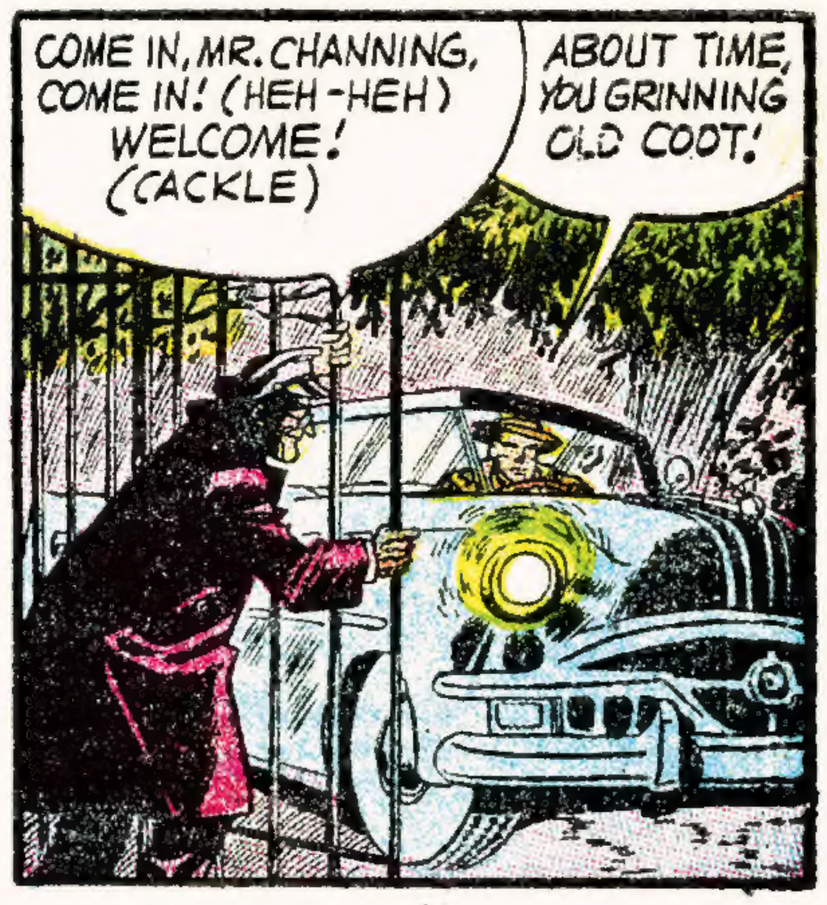
The End

I WENT TO THE PLACE WITH MY MIND FILLED WITH APPREHENSION, AND AFTER ARRIVING, I FELT THAT MY FEARS WERE WELL FOUNDED. BUT EVEN THEN I HAD NOT SEEN THE...

MARK OF THE BRUTE

WELL, WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?
MY NAME IS CHANNING. MY FIANCEE, MISS KATHERINE NORTON, IS SECRETARY TO MR. WENDELL ACTION. SHE IS STAYING AT THIS PLACE AND I WANT TO SEE HER!

THE OLD MAN WENT BACK INTO THE GATEHOUSE AND AFTER WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY, FINALLY CAME BACK SAYING.



I HAD NOT LIKED IT FROM THE FIRST, BUT KATHY HAD LAUGHED AT ME. "DARLING, IT'S ONLY FOR THE SUMMER! THESE VERMONT HILLS WILL BE BEAUTIFUL. WELL, THIS WAS MID-NOVEMBER! COLD GREY MID-NOVEMBER!

Weird Terror #11, May 1954. Art: Don Heck. Publisher: Comic Media.

I HAD THE FEELING THAT EYES WERE WATCHING ME FROM THE GAPING WINDOWS. WHEN THE DOOR OPENED, A COLD DAMP DRAFT STRUCK ME. BUT THERE AT THE DOOR WAS m

KATHY!

COME IN, DARLING! WHY DID YOU WORRY ABOUT ME?

YES, KATHY WAS SMILING, BUT IN HER EYES WAS TERROR!

LORD, IT'S COLD IN HERE!

I HADN'T NOTICED, ROY. COME AND MEET MR. ACTION.

MR. ACTION, THIS IS ROY CHANNING, MY FIANCE!

WELCOME, CHANNING! DOUBTLESS YOU HAVE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT KATHY. WELL,,, BUSINESS, YOU KNOW,,,

TAKE OFF YOUR HAT AND COAT, CHANNING. YOU'LL GET USED TO THE COLD. IT'S HEALTHIER. WE NEVER USE FIRES HERE,,, WELL,, I'LL LEAVE YOU WITH KATHY. YOU'LL HAVE THINGS TO TALK ABOUT.

KATHY'S LIPS STILL SMILED WHEN WE WERE ALONE. BUT HER EYES STILL CRIED TERROR. I SAID,,,

COME ON KATHY. I'M TAKING YOU OUT OF THIS PLACE!

OH ROY! DON'T SAY THAT! I,,I'M VERY **HAPPY** HERE!

I SAID, COME ON, KATHY! WE'RE GETTING,,, UH, WHAT TH!!!!

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, CHANNING. YOU'LL **NEVER** GET OUT OF HERE! **NO ONE** EVER LEAVES THIS PLACE!

BENEATH MY COAT I HAD AN AUTOMATIC IN A SHOULDER HOLSTER, BUT I DID NOT GO FOR IT. I JUST STOOD CLENCHING MY FISTS IN FURY!!!!

YOU'LL BE VERY HAPPY HERE, CHANNING. WON'T HE KATHY?

Y,,,YES, MR. ACTION. VERY HAPPY!

YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!!!

IT'S NECESSARY, CHANNING !!!THIS DISCIPLINE. YOU SEE, THERE IS A MONSTER. SOME CALL IT OCCULT!!! BUT IT'S

KATHY, GO TO YOUR ROOM. I'LL SHOW MR. CHANNING TO HIS!

ACTION LEFT ME IN MY ROOM! I STOOD ALONE IN A COLD FURY. THE WHOLE SINISTER SET-UP WAS PHONY. YET!!! WHILE KATHY WAS IN DANGER, I'D HAVE TO MOVE WITH UTMOST CAUTION!!!

PIPE, CHANNING! PUT AWAY THE PIPE! WE ALLOW NO FIRE HERE! NOT EVEN SMOKING!

THAT DEVIL! MIRRORS AND A LOUDSPEAKER INSIDE THAT GRILLE! HE CAN SPY ALL OVER THE HOUSE!

I STAYED IN MY ROOM PONDERING OVER THIS MADHOUSE. ABOUT MIDNIGHT!!!

AN ENVELOPE! BEING SHOVED UNDER THE DOOR!

IT WAS KATHY. FRANTICALLY I TORE IT OPEN AND READ!!!

AM DOING THIS AT A TERRIBLE RISK!!! HE IS **MAD**, BUT HE **CAN TALK WITH THE MONSTER!** HE **CAN PROTECT US FROM IT!** DON'T TRY TO OUTWIT HIM, DARLING. HE SEES EVERY-THING! JUST PRAY!!! PRAY!!! PRAY!!!!

I HAD SCARCELY FINISHED READING THE NOTE, WHEN!!!

IT'S KATHY'S VOICE! I'LL KILL HIM! **I'LL KILL HIM!**

EEEE! NO! NO! DON'T WHIP ME! DON'T WHIP ME! **OW-W-W-W EEEEEEE!!**

EVEN AS I RUSHED INTO THE HALL, KATHY'S SCREAMS STOPPED, AND I DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO. GRIMLY I RETURNED TO MY ROOM AND WAITED!!! WITH DEATH IN MY HAND!

AN HOUR LATER!!!

THE DOOR'S OPENING!!!

THERE ARE NO WORDS TO DESCRIBE LUNGING, WEAVING, ANTICIPATING THE LYNE OF FIRE OF MY WEAPON, WAS NOW UPON ME...

IT CAME AT ME, CLAWING, SNARLING, DIGGING GREAT CHUNKS OF FLESH. I TRIED TO GET MY GUN INTO POSITION, BUT THE HUGE PAW GRABBED IT...

I FIRED, FELT THE PAW INCH MOMENTARILY AS THE BULLET WENT THROUGH IT. THE GREAT FANGS CAME AT MY THROAT...

THEN A SOFT VOICE...

THIS IS WENDELL ACTION... ACTION CALLING... EASY DOES IT NOW! COME AWAY, BEAST... LEAVE THE ROOM NOW...

THE VOICE SEEMED TO HAVE A DISTRACTING EFFECT ON IT. IT YANKED THE GUN FROM MY HAND AND TURNED AWAY...

BREAKFAST WAS A STRANGE AFFAIR. UNCOOKED FOOD! CEREAL FRUIT, SALAD. KATHY THERE WITH WELTS FROM ACTION'S WHIP; ME WITH TORN CLOTHES, A GOUGED BODY; ACTION WITH A HAND WOUND....

I SAVED YOUR LIFE, CHANNING. BELIEVE ME, I DID.

THANKS!

LIAR! YOU'RE THE MONSTER!

I LIVED FOR WEEKS IN THAT PLACE OF HORROR. I WAS TOO ANGRY TO EVEN FEEL THE COLD, YET TOO CAUTIOUS TO ACT IN HASTE. FOR MY EVERY MOVE WAS WATCHED BY ACTION OR HIS SLAVES! MEN AND WOMEN HELD IN FEAR, AS KATHY WAS!!!

I SAW UNBELIEVABLE ACTS OF BRUTALITY ON ACTION'S PART. ACTS INCITED ONLY BY HIS WHIMS.

AND I, TOO BECAME A SLAVE WITH THE OTHERS!!!

BUT WHERE THE OTHERS WERE MOTIVATED BY FEAR, MY ACTION'S GREW FROM ANGER, AND THE FORMING OF A PLAN!!!!

UNTIL, ON A NIGHT NEAR THE END OF NOVEMBER, I FOUND I HAD ENOUGH WOOD HIDDEN IN MY ROOM TO PUT MY SCHEME TO WORK!!!!

PUT THAT FIRE OUT CHANNING! PUT IT OUT! OR BY HEAVEN I SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE MONSTER!

HA-HA-HA, ALL RIGHT, YOU PHONY, LET HIM COME!

IT CAME SCREAMING AND ROARING, AS I KNEW IT WOULD BUT I WAS READY!

I LUNGED WITH FLAME IN MY HAND AND FURY IN MY HEART!!!

IT FLED AND I FOLLOWED, ALL MY ANGER RISING TO ACTION!!!

IT WENT TO THE ROOM I RECOGNIZED AS ACTIONS... WITH ITS TELEVISION-RADIO PLUG-IN, THAT COULD INSPECT ALL PARTS OF THE HOUSE, AND LORD KNOWS WHAT ELSE. BUT MY ATTENTION WAS NOT ON THAT...

YOU LIAR! SCREWBALL! MONSTER! ACTION!

IT BECAME A FIGHT TO THE DEATH, AND I WAS WINNING AS HE TRIED TO CONTROL HIS FEAR OF THE FIRE AND MY MADDENING FURY! I PRESSED MY FULL STRENGTH ON THE MONSTROUS THROAT, AND SOON THE GURGLING STOPPED....

KATHY... EVERYONE! IT'S ALL OVER! YOU CAN COME... AND SEE!

KATHY ARRIVED FIRST... WHITE AS A SHEET....

THERE IT IS KATHY. NO MORE FEAR. IT'S ACTION... THE MONSTER ...AS I KNEW IT WOULD BE!

BUT... ARE YOU SURE?

KATHY HAD DOUBTS, BUT THERE WERE NONE IN MY MIND, AS I SAID...

OF COURSE... I'LL PULL OFF THE MASK IN A MINUTE....

HE WAS MAD ...THE.... SECRETARY HE ADVERTISED FOR IN THE PAPERS... WAS TO REPLACE A WOMAN WHO HAD KILLED HERSELF IN TERROR!

HE THOUGHT HE WAS A KING... SOMEONE ALL POWERFUL. AND HE WAS UTTERLY CRUEL. BUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD NEVER SUSPECTED...

I TORE OFF THE "MONSTER" DISGUISE FROM ACTION'S BODY. I HAD KILLED ACTION; I WOULD DESTROY HIS AWFUL HOAX. BUT AS I TORE THE COVERINGS FROM HIS HANDS AND FACE....

MY GOD! LOOK!

EEEEEE!!

I HAD GUESSED THAT THE MAN WAS BESTIAL, HENCE HAD A BEAST'S TERROR OF FIRE. THAT WAS MY WEDGE FOR WEDGE FOR VICTORY. BUT I HAD NEVER GUESSED THAT ACTION'S TRUE NATURE WAS SO MONSTROUS THAT AFTER DEATH HE WOULD BECOME THAT VERY GORGON!!

THE END.

AGAIN WE GATHER, HEH HEH, READERS OF HORROR! YOU ARE WELCOME TO RIDE INTO OUR STORE OF GRUESOME, TITIVATING TALES WHICH WILL MAKE YOUR COLD BLOOD RUN COLDER, YOUR SPINE MORE RIGID, AND YOUR PULSE PALPITATE... THIS IS A STORY OF HORSES AND NIGHTMARES!

NICK TEMPLETON, WEALTHY MAN-OF-THE-WORLD, SPOILED AND SELF INDULGENT, BROUGHT WOMEN SWOONING AT HIS FEET! DALLIANCE WITH OTHER MEN'S SWEETHEARTS OR WIVES WAS TO HIM A GAME OF PECULIAR CHARM IN WHICH HE ALWAYS CAME OUT THE VICTOR... UNTIL ONE MAN REPAID HIM WITH A ***GIFT OF HATE!*** COME, HEH,HEH, HEH, JOIN US IN ....

Terror of the NIGHTMARES!

MY GOD! IT'S ALMA! *DEAD!!*

MANFRED LINK PLIED HIS BLOODY TRADE, HIS SHARP BLADE LEFT NO SCARS AND THE GULLETS HE CUT WERE FREQUENT! YET, MANFRED WAS NO CRIMINAL...

COME IN!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

THE THROATS MANFRED CUT WERE NOT HUMAN. HE WAS THE TOWN'S TAXIDERMIST! ONE OF HIS BEST CUSTOMERS WAS NICK TEMPLETON, WHOSE HUNTING PROWESS WAS ALMOST AS REMARKABLE AS HIS PROWESS WITH THE LADIES...

HOW'S MY STAG'S HEAD COMING, MANFRED?

I'M WORKING ON IT, MR. TEMPLETON! A FINE SPECIMEN!

Jon D'Agostino

Dark Mysteries #16, February 1954. Art: Jon D'Agostino. Publisher: Master Comics.

IT WAS A STRANGE ROOM WHICH THE TWO MEN ENTERED FROM THE WORK SHOP: LIFE-LIKE BEASTS OF THE WILDS SURROUNDED THEM IN FRIGHTENING ARRAY...

REMARKABLE WORK, MANFRED! I'D HATE TO MEET UP WITH THESE DEAD ANIMALS IN THE JUNGLE, HA. HA.!

SUDDENLY...

MANFRED, THAT BEAR IS... WHY, WHO'S THAT?

THAT'S ALMA, MY WIFE! COME HERE DEAR AND MEET MR. TEMPLETON!

WAS IT THE CONTRAST OF ALMA'S BEAUTY AGAINST THE UGLINESS OF THE BEASTS. OR NICK'S USUAL WEAKNESS FOR THE LADIES. THAT MADE HIS BLOOD RUSH WILDLY THROUGH HIS BODY? AND WHY DID ALMA SUDDENLY HOLD HER BREATH?

YOUR WIFE? SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!

NICK DID NOT WANT TO TEAR HIMSELF AWAY FROM THIS LOVELY CREATURE. BUT HE DID! THE MEETING S RVED TO MAKE ALMA VENT HER USUAL GRIEVANCE...

YOU PROMISED TO BUY ME A NEW DRESS AND TAKE ME TO THE FAIR!

YOU KNOW WE HAVE NO MONEY FOR FOOLISH THINGS!

I'M SICK AND TIRED OF ALL THIS POVERTY!

BE PATIENT, ALMA! SOME DAY WE WILL HAVE SAVED ENOUGH MONEY FOR A BIG CITY PLACE, WE WILL BE RICH!

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING...

'MORNING, MANFRED! I'VE COME TO SEE ABOUT MY STAG!

THAT'S WHAT YOU CAME FOR YESTERDAY, MR. TEMPLETON! IT'S STILL NOT READY!

I CAME TO PAY YOU SOME MONEY ON ACCOUNT!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MR TEMPLETON!

YOU AND I KNOW IT'S AN OLD TRICK BUT SOON AFTER NICK LEFT, ALMA, WHILE CLEANING, FOUND THAT NICK HAD DROPPED HIS WALLET IN THE SHOP...

MANFRED, LOOK! THIS WALLET AND ALL THIS MONEY!

MR. TEMPLETON LOST IT! WE MUST RETURN IT TO HIM AT ONCE! BUT I'M SO BUSY! YOU MUST GO!

YES, MANFRED ROSE TO THE BAIT AND THREW THE BEAUTIFUL ALMA TO THE WOLF! NEVER BEFORE HAD SHE SEEN SUCH WEALTH AS AT THE TEMPLETON ESTATE. .

THANK YOU FOR MY WALLET! YOU ARE AS SWEET AS YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL! HERE IS A REWARD!

I HAVE NEVER HAD SO MUCH MONEY BEFORE!

ALMA WAS OVER WHELMED AND SHE GAVE AS FREELY OF HER CHARMS AS NICK OF HIS MONEY...

LET ME KISS YOU BEFORE YOU GO, AND PROMISE ME YOU WILL RETURN... SOON!

OH, NO! WELL... JUST ONE THEN...

OHHH...ONLY ONE MORE, NICK!

YES, THE INEVITABLE HAPPENED! THAT KISS WAS THE FIRST OF MANY MORE MEETINGS AND PASSIONATE EMBRACES...AND SOON NICK WAS FALLING IN IN LOVE WITH ALMA...

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH, ALMA! YOU MUST NEVER LEAVE ME!

OH, MY DARLING! I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU!

WITH ALMA'S ABSENCES GROWING MORE FREQUENT, THE SUSPICIONS OF MANFRED STARTED TO TAKE ROOT...

AGAIN FOR GROCERIES? BUT YOU WENT YESTERDAY!

OH, HE SUSPECTS ME!

I DO IT TO SAVE MONEY!

MANFRED WAS NOT SO EASILY APPEASED AND HE DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE PRETTY ALMA.

OH, NO! SHE IS GOING TO VISIT MR. TEMPLETON!

PERHAPS IT IS ONLY AN INNOCENT VISIT! I MUST FIND OUT!

NICK, I THINK MANFRED SUSPECTS US! WE MUST NOT SEE EACH OTHER FOR A WHILE!

YOU KNOW BEST, MY LOVE! BUT DON'T STAY AWAY TOO LONG!

A WEEK PASSED! LIKE AN OBSESSION, NICK COULD NOT GET ALMA OUT OF HIS MIND! INSTEAD OF LEADING A HUNTING PARTY, HE HAD FALLEN LISTLESSLY BEHIND...

I'LL OFFER HIM A JOB ON MY PLACE! MAYBE MANFRED WILL BE TEMPTED BY LARGE WAGES!

THE IRREGULAR TERRAIN AND NICK'S WANDERING THOUGHTS BROUGHT ON DISASTER AS NICK'S FAVORITE HORSE, PRINCE, STUMBLED, THROWING NICK...

HEY!

WHINNYY!

PRINCE! YOU'RE LEG IS BROKEN! SORRY, OLD PAL, I'VE GOT TO SHOOT YOU!

AND SO, NICK PUT HIS BELOVED HORSE OUT OF HIS AGONY, HIS OWN SPIRITS AT THEIR LOWEST...

GOODBYE, PRINCE!

BAM!

THE ONLY CONSOLATION TO NICK WAS THAT MANFRED WOULD MAKE AN EXCELLENT MOUNT OF HIS HORSE... AND HE COULD SEE ALMA AGAIN.

IT MUST BE PERFECT! HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE, MANFRED!

GIVE ME THREE WEEKS, MR. TEMPLETON!

ALMA HEARD NICK'S VOICE AND SHE COULD NOT RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO FOLLOW HIM...

NICK! NICK! HE WATCHES ME CLOSELY!

I MISS YOU SO MUCH, YOU MUST LEAVE HIM!

TAXI

MANFRED HEARD ALMA'S DOOR CLICK AND ALTHOUGH HIS SUSPICIONS HAD BEEN LULLED, HE AGAIN DECIDED TO FOLLOW HER...

OH, NO! NO!

LATE THAT NIGHT, ALMA RETURNED TO THE WAITING MANFRED! HIS EYES, AND THE EYES OF ALL THE BEASTS ON THE WALL, STARED ACCUSINGLY AT HER...

WHY DID YOU COME BACK FROM MR. TEMPLETON?

ER... I... I... SO YOU SPIED ON ME, AND YOU KNOW!

ALL HIS PENT-UP FURY AND JEALOUSY CAME OUT IN THE WILD BLOWS OF THE IRATE HUSBAND...

OHH, I AM GOING AWAY! I'M GOING TO NICK!

THAT YOU ARE, BUT NOT RIGHT AWAY!

SOCK!

THAT NIGHT, MANFRED'S SHARP BLADE CUT IT'S MOST BEAUTIFUL THROAT, SO BEAUTIFUL, IT COULD HAVE BEEN ALMA'S...HEH...HEH...

ALL WE KNOW IS THAT ALMA WAS NO LONGER SEEN AND SOON WAS MISSED! EVERYONE WAS CUT UP ABOUT IT...MAYBE EVEN ALMA...HEH, HEH, BUT MANFRED HAD A READY ANSWER...

ALMA'S BEEN AWAY FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, MANFRED! WHEN IS SHE COMING BACK?

SHE WENT TO THE CITY TO FIND A NEW SHOP FOR ME! WHEN I FINISH PRINCE, YOU WILL SEE HER, I PROMISE YOU!

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MEANWHILE, MANFRED WORKED PATIENTLY RESTORING NICK'S HORSE...

SOON YOU WILL BE FINISHED, PRINCE OLD BOY!

FINALLY, MANFRED DELIVERED THE STUFFED AND MOUNTED PRINCE, AND A LIFE LIKE REPRODUCTION IT WAS...

YOU'RE AN ARTIST, MANFRED! IT'S PRINCE COME TO LIFE! MY TROPHY ROOM IS IN THAT BUILDING! WE'LL BRING HIM IN THERE!

FOR MONTHS, NICK CONSOLED HIMSELF FOR THE MISSING ALMA BY ENJOYING HIS STUFFED HORSE...

WHY DOESN'T SHE RETURN TO US AS SHE PROMISED... PRINCE, YOU HAVE BEEN INJURED!

SOMEHOW, PRINCE'S LEG HAD BEEN CUT AND AS HE EXAMINED AND OPENED THE RIP, NICK SAW...

A...A *SKELETON!* HUMAN BONES...

FEVERISHLY, NICK PICKED UP A DAGGER AND STARTED TO SLIT THE HORSE OPEN...

WHAT TRICK IS THIS?

MY GOD! IT'S ALMA! HE KILLED HER, AND SENT HER CORPSE TO ME! HE KEPT HIS PROMISE!

SO THIS WAS MANFRED'S REVENGE... A GIFT OF HATE... THE CORPSE OF HIS WIFE...

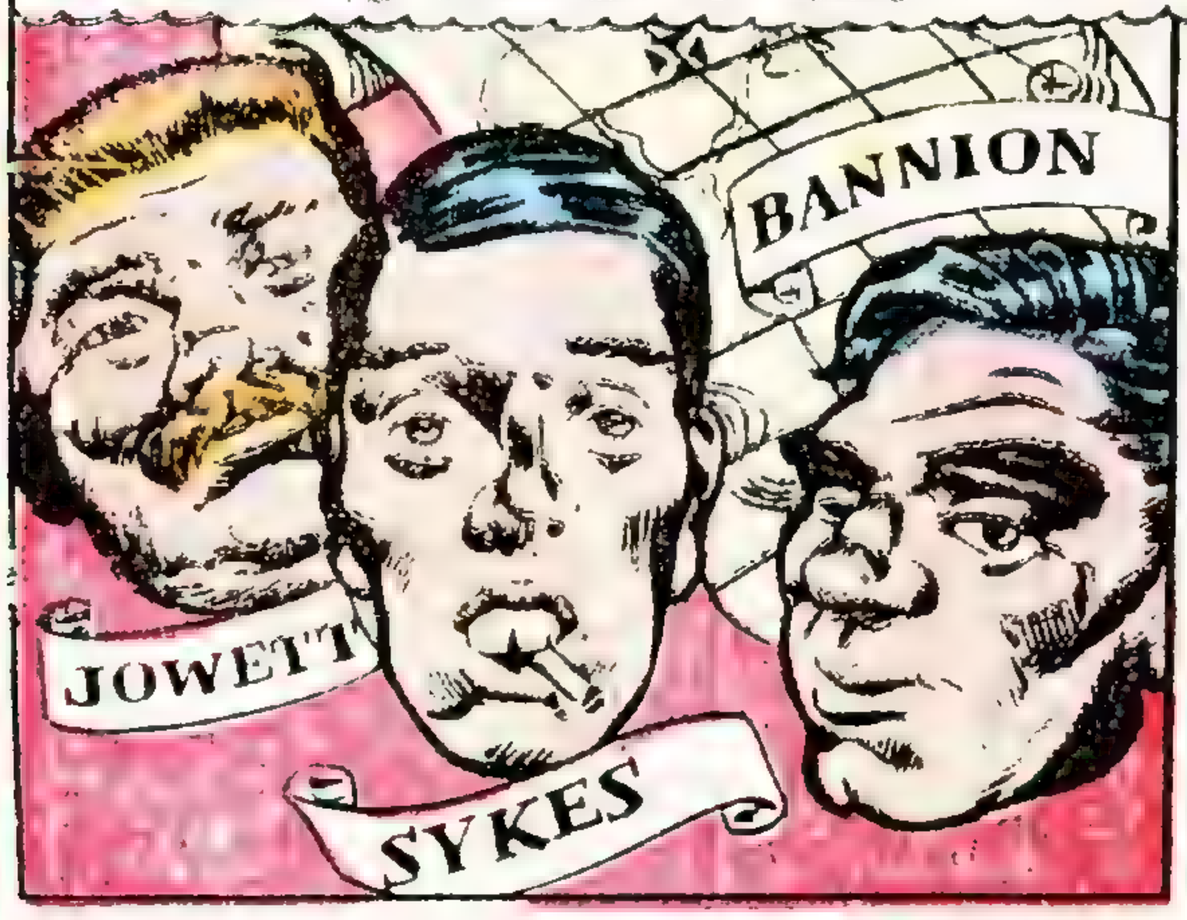
YES, THE JEALOUS HUSBAND KEPT HIS PROMISE! SO YOU SEE, YOU MUST BEWARE OF THOSE WHO BRING YOU GIFTS...AND WHAT'S MORE, NEVER LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH OR IN THE SIDE... *HEH, HEH, HEH!*

THE END

YOU CAN'T CHEAT A GHOST

OVER THE TINY SOUTH SEA ISLAND HUNG A MIASMA OF DEATH, A SMELL OF CARRION! MANY MEN HAD DIED THERE AND MANY MORE WERE YET TO DIE! SCREAMS OF TORTURE AND TORMENT RANG THROUGH THE SWAMPS LIKE THE BELLS OF HADES—AND OVER ALL STALKED THE BONY FIGURE OF THE FLAMING PIRATE...

WHEN MEN LIKE THESE GET TOGETHER IN A COMMON GREED FOR GOLD, PIRATE GOLD, THERE IS BOUND TO BE TROUBLE! SO MEET THREE OF A KIND—JOWETT, THE DUTCHMAN; SYKES, THE COCKNEY; AND BANNION, THE TOUGHEST IRISHMAN EVER TO ESCAPE FROM SING-SING...



ONE DAY A LUGGER DROPS ANCHOR NEAR AN ISLAND WITH THE IRONICAL NAME OF ISLE OF PARADISE..

WON'T BE LONG NOW, MATES, TILL WE GET THAT BLOODY TREASURE!

THIS SURE BEATS SING-SING!

HERE AT LAST, JA!

Strange Mysteries #9, January 1953. Art: Iger Shop. Publisher: Superior.

THAT NIGHT..

TOMORROW WE LOOK FOR TREASURE, JA?

YER BLOODY RIGHT WE WILL, DUTCHY!

I GOT ITCHY HANDS FOR THAT GOLD ALREADY! ONLY ONE THING WORRIES ME...

BANNION WASTES NO TIME PUTTING INTO EFFECT A CRAFTY PLAN OF HIS OWN...

HOW ABOUT THE GHOST THAT'S SUPPOSED TO GUARD THE TREASURE? THE ONE THEY CALL THE FLAMING PIRATE?

GHOST! GOR BLIMEY! A FORTUNE AND HE'S WORRYING ABOUT GHOSTS, DUTCHY!

JA! IS GOOT! I THINK MAYBE THE YANK GOT COLD FEET!

LATER, AS THE OTHERS SLEEP...

MY PLAN IS BEGINNING TO WORK! I GOT THAT FLAMING PIRATE STUFF PLANTED IN THEIR MINDS NOW— PRETTY SOON IT'LL PAY OFF! I'M KEEPING **ALL** THE TREASURE FOR MYSELF!

AND NEXT DAY...

DON'T TALK, YA BLARSTED FOOLS. DIG — DIG!

THIS IS FIRST SPOT MARKED ON MAP!

WE OUGHTA FIND SOME-THING SOON!

A SEA CHEST, JA?

GIMME! HURRY!

HEY! THAT DON'T LOOK HEAVY ENOUGH TO CARRY MUCH TREASURE!

A H-HAND!
IT WAS A HAND!
NO TREASURE! JUST ANOTHER OLD MAP!
PY GOSH, WE GOT TO LOOK MORE, JA?
JA, YOU DUMB DUTCHMAN! THAT OLD PIRATE WAS SMART! HE MADE TWO MAPS!
LET'S GET GOING!
NEFER BEFORE I WORK SO HARD!
C'MON, IT AIN'T FAR NOW, MATES!
I GOT A FEELING WE AIN'T GONNA FIND THIS TREASURE SO EASY!
SO ONCE AGAIN...
VE GOT SOMETHING, I TINK!
ANOTHER CHEST!
WORK, YOU POOR YAPS! YOU WORK AND I'LL GET THE TREASURE!
WE ROOKED AGAIN, JA!
ANOTHER BLEEDING MAP!
YEAH, BUT I GOTTA HUNCH THIS IS THE LAST ONE! THE NEXT SPOT WILL BE THE TREASURE!
AND AFTER ANOTHER LONG, LONG SEARCH, AS IT GROWS DARK...
I GOT BROKEN BACK FOR SURE!
WHYN'T YA DO SOME OF THE RUDDY WORK, YANK?
NAW! I'M QUITTING! LET THE TREASURE WAIT TILL MORNING!
3

BUT A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THIS OUGHTA SCARE THEM OFF, NOW THAT I GOT THE GHOST IDEA PLANTED! GHOST! HA-HA—

I'LL JUST RUB A LITTLE OF THIS PHOSPHORUS ON ME AND I'LL **BE** THE FLAMING PIRATE! TOO BAD I GOTTA GO TO ALL THIS TROUBLE, BUT THE LIMEY IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN NAVIGATE!

YOWWWWW— AFTER MY GOLD! I'LL KILL YOU—UUUUU!

R-RUN, DUTCHY!

A GHOST— JA!

LEMME OUT OF HERE! MOVE OVER, DUTCHY!

YOU'LL DIE— DIE!

YIIIIIIII!

HA-HA— LOOKIT THE FOOLS RUN!

I'LL CACHE IT DOWN BY THE SHORE FOR NOW! THEN WHEN THEY'RE ASLEEP I CAN GET IT ABOARD!

THERE, THAT'LL HIDE IT FOR NOW! I BETTER GET BACK AND HEAR ALL ABOUT THE—(CHUCKLE)—GHOST!

SO A FEW MINUTES LATER...

I GOTTA ACT SURPRISED! THEN WHEN I KNOW THEY'RE ASLEEP, I'LL STORE THE TREASURE— MY TREASURE— IN THE BILGE THEY'LL NEVER LOOK DOWN THERE!

NO ONE HERE! B-BUT WHERE—HEY, THAT THING! A GALLOWS

AND THEN THE HAIR PRICKLES ALONG BANNIONS NECK AND HE CAN'T CHOKE BACK HIS SCREAM...

YIIIIIIIII— THE DUTCHMAN AND LIMEY! THEIR HANDS CUT OFF— YAAAAAA—

THE FEAR-CRAZED MAN BLUNDERS WILDLY THROUGH THE NIGHT...

S-SOMEONE ELSE ON THIS ISLAND! MURDERED THOSE TWO! I G-GOTTA GET THE TREASURE AND GET AWAY BEFORE THEY KILL ME, TOO!

HURRY—MUST HURRY! WHOEVER KILLED THEM MIGHT BE WATCHING ME THIS MINUTE!

EEEEEEEE— THEIR H-HANDS! B-BUT THEY WERE BACK THERE! AND N-NOW...

AND NOW I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

HUH? WHO... I THOUGHT I HEARD A VOICE!

GAAAA— W—WHO ARE YOU?

FOOL! I'M THE GHOST OF RED GAUNT! THEY HANGED ME AND BURNT MY BODY, BUT I CAME BACK TO GUARD MY TREASURE! DID YOU THINK I WOULD LET *YOU* STEAL IT?

NAAAA— STAY AWAY! LET ME GO! I DIDN'T WANT YOUR TREASURE!

HO-HO-HO! RUN, LITTLE MAN! YOU CAN'T GET AWAY!

But...

I D-DID IT! I'LL GET THE LUGGER UNDER SAIL, GET AWAY! IT WON'T GET ME!

AND THEN HIS HEART STOPS BEATING...

WELCOME ABOARD, MY FOOLISH FRIEND! WE'RE GOING FOR A LITTLE SAIL!

N-NO! IT CAN'T BE...

D-DON'T KILL ME! PLEASE DON'T KILL ME! I'LL DO ANYTHING...

YES, I SUPPOSE YOU WOULD TO SAVE YOUR RASCALLY NECK! YOU'RE A LUCKY FOOL! I'M GOING TO LET YOU LIVE!

THEY HUNG AND BURNT ME 300 YEARS AGO! BUT MY EVIL SPIRIT LIVED, AND MY BONES! SO NOW I'M GOING TO SAIL THE SEAS AGAIN! UNDER MY OWN FLAG! AND YOU'RE COMING WITH ME! YOU— (CHUCKLE)—WANTED TO PLAY PIRATE, DID YOU?

AND SO THE STRANGEST OF ALL VOYAGES BEGINS...

THERE! MY OLD FLAG! AND MY TREASURE IS IN THE HOLD! GET READY TO MAKE SAIL, YOU FOOL!

M-MAKE SAIL? SURE...

DESPITE THE TERROR THAT GNAWS AT HIS HEART LIKE RATS, THE YANK GETS A LITTLE OF HIS COURAGE BACK...

HE SAID THE TREASURE WAS ABOARD! AND I'M STILL ALIVE! IF I COULD ONLY THINK—THERE MUST BE A WAY TO GET RID OF—OF GHOSTS!

HURRY, BLAST YOU! RUN THOSE SAILS UP!

AS THE LUGGER HEADS OUT TO SEA, THE YANK GETS AN IDEA...

HE SAID TO GET SOME NEW LINES FROM THE STORAGE LOCKER—AND THERE'S **BLASTING POWDER** THERE!

GOT TO HURRY, BUT THIS MIGHT WORK! HE'S ONLY A PILE OF **BONES!**

BLASTING POWDER

AVAST DOWN THERE, YOU SCUT! IF YER UP TO MISCHIEF...

COMING!

AND I'M GONNA SEND SEND YOU BACK WHERE YOU BELONG! FOREVER, THIS TIME!

NOW I GOT YA— GHOST OR NOT!

HO— TRY THAT, WOULD YOU!

SCUM! OLD RED GAUNT KNOWS A TRICK OR TWO!

EEEEEEEEE—

NAAAAAAAAAA—

AFTER THE HOLOCAUST THERE IS A LONG SILENCE, BROKEN ONLY BY THE WILD SIGHING OF THE WAVES AND WIND! THEN, UP FROM THE GREEN DEPTHS, SLOWLY FORMING, COMES A WEIRD AND TERRIBLE THING..

AND ABOVE THE WIND RISES A SPECTRAL CHANT AS A GHOSTLY SHIP WITH A GHOSTLY CREW, GOES SAILING INTO ETERNITY..

AND THRICE TIMES THREE DIED HORRIBLY— A-DANCING ON THE GALLOWS— HO! ♫

YO-HO-HO — DIED HORRIBLY ♫

A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE STORY WAS TOLD TO YOUNG BOB RANCE, IN THE LONELY, SNOW-BOUND RAILWAY STATION! AND WHEN THE ENDING CAME, RANCE FOUND HIMSELF THE CHIEF ACTOR IN THE BLOOD-CHILLING CLIMAX TO THE TALE OF THE...

MONSTER of SARNO GULCH!

HA! HA! HA! SO! I'VE FOUND YOU!!

QUITE A STORY YOU'VE TOLD ME! LUCKY WE'RE NOT MIXED UP IN IT!... WHA--?!

LOOK! HELP! HELP!!

NODEL ALASCIA

...VILLAGE IS TWO MILES AWAY! WELL! I SURE THOUGHT A CAB OR BUS WOULD MEET THE TRAIN...

...NO TICKET AGENT!...

WHY, HELLO THERE!

HELLO!

Witchcraft #6, March 1953. Pencils: Norman Nodel; inks: Vincent Alascia. Publisher: Avon.

WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU MISS THE TRAIN?

THAT TRAIN COMES BACK IN ABOUT AN HOUR! I'M TAKING IT BACK TO THE CITY!

I'M A REPORTER FOR THE *DAILY ARGUS!* WE'VE HEARD THERE'S SOME WEIRD KIND OF BEAST ROAMING AROUND HERE, A THING THAT LOOKS SOMETHING LIKE A *MAN!* KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

WHY--OH, YES, I'VE HEARD THAT!

HE ROAMS BY NIGHT, THEY SAY! I DON'T GUESS ANYBODY EVER GOT NEAR HIM AND LIVED TO TELL IT!

HE'S KILLED PEOPLE--CARRIED THE BODIES OFF AN' BURIED 'EM! AT LEAST, WE'VE HEARD THAT!

YES! PEOPLE ARE MISSING AROUND HERE! I GUESS THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED!

...SO MY PAPER SENT ME UP TO GET THE DOPE!

WELL! WE'RE BOTH IN THE SAME BOAT! I WRITE MAGAZINE STORIES! I CAME UP A FEW DAYS AGO! AND I SURE FOUND OUT PLENTY!

I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU--IT'S QUITE A STORY! GIVES YOU THE CREEPS! PARTICULARLY GOOD STUFF FOR ME--BECAUSE THERE'S A GIRL IN IT! WANT TO HEAR WHAT THEY SAY AROUND HERE?

YOU BET I DO! SHOOT!

THERE WAS A FELLOW, THEY SAY, NAMED GEORGE BRUNO. HE HAD PLENTY OF MONEY; TRAVELED A LOT! YEAR OR SO AGO, HE WAS IN HARTA--THAT'S A SMALL CARIBBEAN ISLAND --AND...

THIS VOODOO STUFF HERE IN HARTA CERTAINLY SOUNDS INTERESTING! WISH I COULD GET TO SEE ONE OF THEIR SECRET RITUALS..

THIS GEORGE BRUNO WAS A STRANGE, BROODING SORT OF FELLOW! HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN THINGS SUPERNATURAL, AND NOW..."

...NO WHITE MAN IS ALLOWED TO SEE THE SACRED VOODOO RITUAL! I'LL DISGUISE MYSELF...

"IN THE MOLTEN SILVER OF THE TROPIC NIGHT, FURTIVELY HE FOLLOWED THE SOUNDS OF THE DISTANT DRUMS!"

...CAN'T BE FAR NOW! JUST DOWN THAT HILL!...

BOOM! BOOM!

STRANGE, MYSTERIOUS RITUAL! NO WHITE MAN COULD EVER HOPE TO UNDERSTAND IT! GEORGE BRUNO STOOD AWED, WATCHING...

AYEE! GREAT AND NOBLE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD, BLESS US NOW AS WE DRINK THIS POTION IN THINE HONOR!

A MAGIC POTION!... THAT MAN AND GIRL ARE GOING TO DRINK IT!...

WE ARE READY! WE DRINK TO YOU, ALMIGHTY MASTER!

THEN, AS THEY DRANK, THE WEIRD DRUMS SOUNDED WITH THE RHYTHM OF A WILD, PAGAN DANCE! AND...

NOW--THE TRANSFORMATION! MIGHTY SPIRIT--TRANSFORM THEM!

"WAS THE SHIMMERING TROPIC MOONLIGHT TRICKING BRUNO SO THAT HE THOUGHT HE SAW...?"

...AM I IMAGINING IT? THEY-- THEY'VE TURNED INTO-- BEASTS!!

MAN INTO BEAST! DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES, IN EVERY PART OF THE WORLD, DARK LEGENDS HAVE TOLD OF THIS BLACK MAGIC! AND NOW, GEORGE BRUNO WAS SEEING IT!"

THEY'RE LEAVING! UGH! HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!

WHAT EVIL TRICK OF FATE MADE GEORGE BRUNO THINK HE'D LIKE TO HAVE SOME OF THAT GHASTLY DEVIL'S BREW? THE IDEA LEAPED AT HIM, AND..."

GREAT SPIRIT, HERE THERE ARE OTHERS WHO WISH TO WORSHIP YOU!

YES! YES! GIVE IT TO US! WE ARE READY!

...I'LL GRAB SOME OF IT! IT'LL BE A SOUVENIR!...

GEORGE BRUNO GOT SAFELY BACK TO HIS HOTEL ROOM, AND..."

...I SURE GOT AWAY WITH IT! GUESS I'D BETTER THROW THAT STUFF AWAY! IT'S PROBABLY A FAKE, BUT I WOULDN'T WANT TO TEST IT! NOT ME!

NOT FOR A WHITE MAN, THE GRIM, AWFUL SECRETS OF VOODOO! HERE IN THE SNOWBOUND, LONELY LITTLE RAILWAY STATION, YOUNG BOB RANCE FOUND HIMSELF SHUDDERING AS THE GIRL TOLD HIM...

WELL! QUITE A STORY! BUT YOU SAID THERE WAS A GIRL IN IT!

THERE WAS! A FOOLISH GIRL, ATTRACTED TO GEORGE BRUNO BECAUSE HE WAS A BROODING, HANDSOME FELLOW! SHE THOUGHT OF IT AS ROMANCE, I GUESS! AND DON'T FORGET, HE WAS WEALTHY! THAT DIDN'T HURT!

"HER NAME WAS ELAINE CONNERS! AN ORPHAN, A STENOGRAPHER--A LONELY GIRL, DREAMING, HOPING FOR ROMANCE! AND ONE EVENING..."

...HE CERTAINLY LOOKS INTERESTING! I WISH...

"IF ONLY ELAINE CONNERS HAD BEEN A LITTLE MORE CONVENTIONAL! BUT, THIS TIME ANYWAY, SHE WASN'T! AND..."

I DON'T WISH TO OFFEND YOU--CHASE ME AWAY IF YOU LIKE! YOU LOOK LONELY --AND SO AM I! COULDN'T I FINISH MY SUPPER HERE?

WHY--OKAY! I AM LONELY! SIT DOWN...

THAT WAS THE BEGINNING! IN THE END, SHE MARRIED HIM! AND HE BROUGHT HER TO SARNO GULCH! HE HAD TO HAVE QUIET, FOR HIS "STUDIES," HE SAID!"

HE ACTS SO QUEERLY!

GEORGE, DEAR, AREN'T YOU WELL?

OF COURSE I AM!

THEY WERE WEALTHY, AND YET HE INSISTED ON LIVING LIKE THIS! NOW ELAINE WAS AFRAID OF HIM! THEN SHE HEARD THE VILLAGE TALES OF A ROAMING MONSTER! AND, AT DAWN ONE MORNING..."

...HE'S GONE! WHY--WHY--?!

SHE PRETENDED TO BE ASLEEP, BUT SUDDENLY, AT THE WINDOW, SHE SAW...

...OHHH--!

"SHE DIDN'T DARE QUESTION HIM! FOR ELAINE THAT DAY WAS A PANIC OF HORROR! AND..."

...I'LL WATCH MY CHANCE! GET OUT OF HERE--TONIGHT!

"THEN THE TERRIFIED GIRL FLED OUT INTO THE STORM!"

...HE HAD SOME HORRIBLE POTION! HE WASN'T GOING TO TRY IT ON HIMSELF-- BUT HE *DID!*

"AND AT SUPPER LATE THAT AFTERNOON..."

I--I'VE GOT TO GO OUT FOR A WHILE THIS EVENING, ELAINE! I--HAVE SOME BUSINESS! BUT I WON'T BE LATE!

...AM I IMAGINING IT? THIS FOOD TASTES QUEER!..

YOU'RE GOING OUT? OH, ALL RIGHT, DEAR!

"SHE FORGOT THE QUEER TASTE OF HER FOOD! BEING LEFT ALONE GAVE HER THE CHANCE TO ESCAPE! FOR A MOMENT SHE PAUSED, LOOKING THROUGH HIS PRIVATE PAPERS, AND..."

...HE'S ALWAYS MAKING NOTES!...HERE IT IS-- *VOODOO SECRETS!*

NOW, IN THE LITTLE RAILWAY STATION, AS THE GIRL WAS TELLING IT TO RANCE...

YOU LIED TO ME! YOU'RE THAT GIRL!

YES! THAT'S WHY I HAD TO TELL YOU ALL THIS! DON'T LEAVE ME! GET ME BACK TO THE CITY!

NOW, HUDDLED THERE IN THE STORM, A WILD PANIC WAS ON THEM BOTH!

WHEN HE COMES BACK AND FINDS ME GONE, HE'LL COME AFTER ME!

IF I ONLY HAD SOME KIND OF WEAPON!

THEN, SUDDENLY...

ELAINE! ELAINE! HA, HA, HA!

???

WE'LL BAR THE DOORS AND WINDOWS! GOT TO HOLD OUT UNTIL THE TRAIN ARRIVES!

IT--IT WON'T BE HERE FOR HALF AN HOUR!

ELAINE! ELAINE!

ELAINE! HA, HA, HA! ELAINE!

SEE IF THAT OTHER WINDOW'S LOCKED, ELAINE!

OHH--HE'S AT THE DOOR! HE'LL SMASH THROUGH THE DOOR!

ELAINE! ELAINE!

I'LL PUT UP THE BEST FIGHT I CAN!

OHHH--

CCRAASH!

THEN TO RANCE CAME A SUDDEN, STABBING THOUGHT! A NEW AND BLOOD-CHILLING HORROR!

SHE SAID THAT... JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO-- HER FOOD TASTED QUEER!...

TERRIBLE REVELATION!...

ELAINE! LET ME IN! HA, HA, HA!!

OHH--I--I FEEL SO STRANGE! SOMETHING'S THE MATTER WITH ME! HELP ME!

OH, NO!!

CRA

ASH

H!

SUPREME HORROR!

HE PUT THAT STUFF IN YOUR FOOD! SO YOU'D BE LIKE HIM!

OHH-- I CAN FEEL IT! HELP ME! HELP ME!!

GHASTLY METAMORPHOSIS!

HA-HA-HA!!

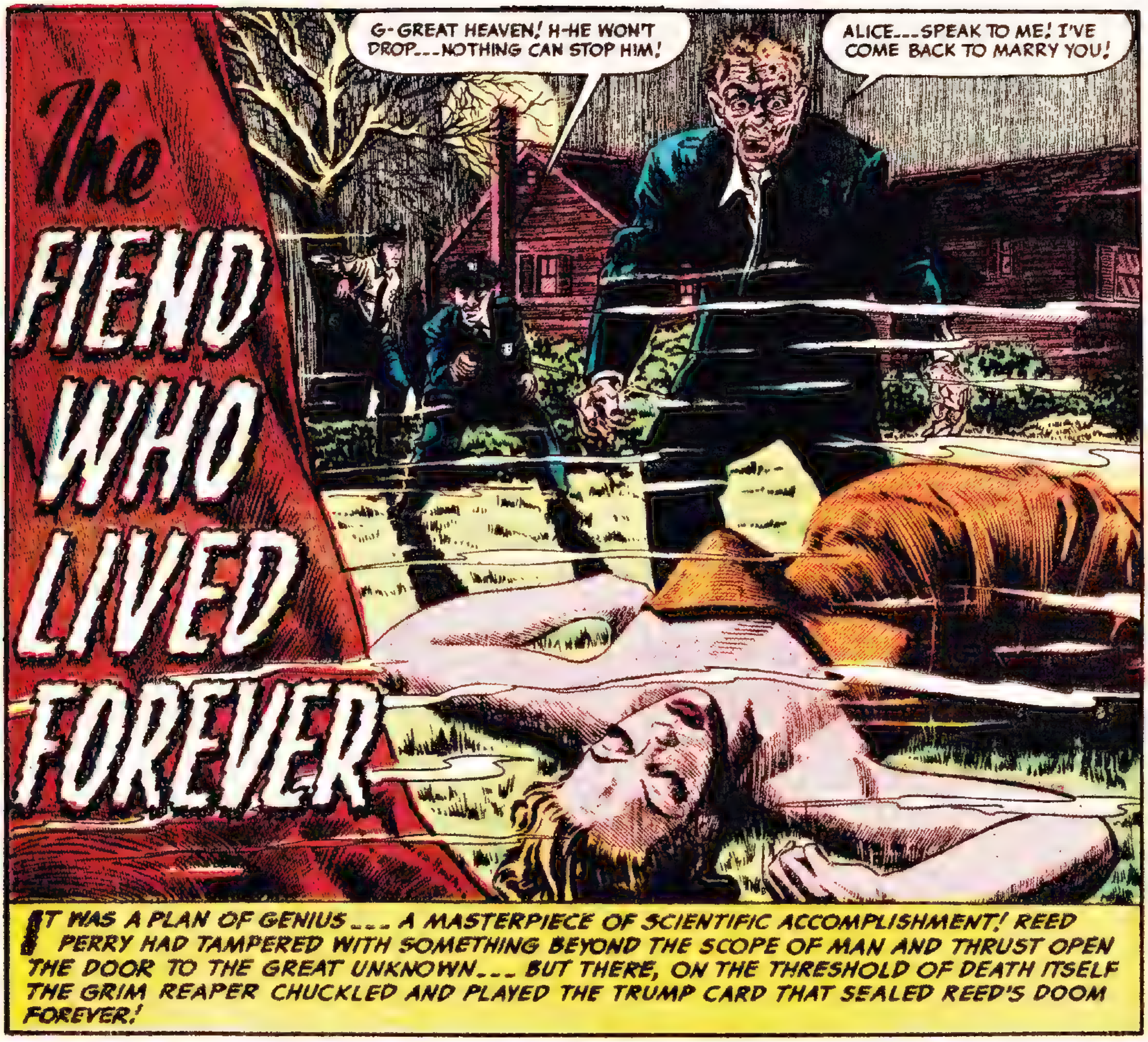
HA! HA! HA! AAAIEEEEE!

THEN, IN THAT SAME TERRIBLE MOMENT...

DEAR ONE--HERE I AM.!!

NO! NO!!

END


The FIEND WHO LIVED FOREVER
G-GREAT HEAVEN! H-HE WON'T DROP---NOTHING CAN STOP HIM!
ALICE---SPEAK TO ME! I'VE COME BACK TO MARRY YOU!
IT WAS A PLAN OF GENIUS---A MASTERPIECE OF SCIENTIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENT! REED PERRY HAD TAMPERED WITH SOMETHING BEYOND THE SCOPE OF MAN AND THRUST OPEN THE DOOR TO THE GREAT UNKNOWN--- BUT THERE, ON THE THRESHOLD OF DEATH ITSELF THE GRIM REAPER CHUCKLED AND PLAYED THE TRUMP CARD THAT SEALED REED'S DOOM FOREVER!
IN THE DIM LIGHT OF DAWN, RESEARCH CHEMIST, REED PERRY, WATCHES GRIMLY AS A BODY IS LOWERED INTO ITS GRAVE!
REST AT PEACE, GUS...YOUR DEATH WAS NOT IN VAIN! SOON---SOON, BECAUSE OF THE HELP OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS, I SHALL HAVE MASTERED THE GREATEST MYSTERY IN THE UNIVERSE!
IT WAS INDEED KIND OF YOU TO INDULGE YOUR HANDYMAN IN SUCH A FINE FUNERAL SERVICE, MR. PERRY! EVEN A MAN WITHOUT HOME OR FAMILY IS ENTITLED TO LEAVE THIS WORLD PROPERLY!
YES, INDEED... GUS WAS A MAN OF KINDNESS... I AM HAPPY THAT I WAS ABLE TO HELP!
JONES

Web of Evil #17, August 1954. Art: Louis Ravielli. Publisher: Quality Comics.

LATER, AS PERRY REACHES HIS LABORATORY...

REED...REED! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH YOU FOR DAYS! WHERE ON EARTH HAVE YOU BEEN?

ALICE! I...TOLD YOU NOT TO BOTHER ME UNTIL I CALLED YOU!

OH, DARLING, YOU'VE BEEN SO STRANGE THESE LAST FEW MONTHS! CAN'T YOU TELL ME WHAT IS WRONG? WHY...CAN'T WE SEE EACH OTHER AS WE USED TO?

IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU'LL DO AS I WISH, ALICE! I'M WORKING ON A VITAL EXPERIMENT FOR A BIG COMPANY! I *MUST* HAVE ABSOLUTE PEACE AND QUIET! NOW... PLEASE LEAVE!

THE RESEARCHER ENTERS A MACABRE LABORATORY...

PLEASE, PLEASE, MR. PERRY...HAVE DONE WITH WHATEVER YOU INTEND TO DO WITH ME! I-I CAN'T STAND THIS PLACE ANY LONGER!

VERY WELL, HARRY!

YOUR LIFE WAS A WORTHLESS THING UNTIL NOW, HARRY...I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR SCIENCE! HERE...BREATHE DEEPLY OF THE FUMES!

Y-YES, MR. PERRY!

THE FOAMING GAS FLOWS DOWN THE BOWERY DERELICT'S THROAT! HIS FACE CONTORTS...HIS BODY BECOMES RIGID!

EXCELLENT...EXCELLENT! THE MUSCLES ARE CONSTRICTING PERFECTLY...THEY ARE FREE FROM PAIN...HARRY'S SINEWS ARE *IMMUNE TO DEATH!*

AH-H-H-H!

WHY, YOU LYING BUTCHER... HE'S *DEAD* NOW... JUST LIKE GUS IS!

YES, PETER... HE IS DEAD ...BUT HIS *MUSCLES* ARE STILL ALIVE!

YOU SEE, PETER, MY EXPERIMENTS HAVE NOT FAILED, ALTHOUGH MY SUBJECTS DIED! MY TESTS KEPT GUS' *NERVES* ALIVE! HARRY'S *SINEWS* STILL HAVE LIFE ...AND NOW, I NEED ONLY KEEP THE HEART INVULNERABLE TO DEATH AND MY PATTERN IS COMPLETE... *A MAN WHO CANNOT DIE!*

GET BACK, YOU, MONSTER! I'LL NOT SUBMIT TO YOUR FIENDISH TESTS LIKE THE OTHERS! YOU'LL HAVE TO *KILL* ME FIRST!

HARDLY, PETER...THAT WOULD SPOIL ALL MY PLANS! I HAVE PREPARED FOR YOUR STRENGTH AND HATRED OF ME! *THERE!*

WHA...?

ABRUPTLY, THE MAN WHO SEEKS TO BREAK THE BARRIER OF LIFE ITSELF CLOSES A CIRCUIT AND...

WILLINGLY, OR UNWILLINGLY YOU SHALL ASSIST ME, PETER!

YIIIIII!

THEN... ENERGY PACKED ELECTRICAL CURRENTS ...COURSING THROUGH YOUR BODY... SHOCKING AND FEEDING YOUR HEART TISSUES AT THE SAME TIME! ALL MY TESTS TEND TO PROVE IT SHOULD WORK, PETER...YOUR HEART SHOULD BECOME A THROBBING ORGAN THAT *CANNOT DIE!*

REED PERRY'S EYES WIDEN WITH EXCITEMENT AS HIS BIZARRE CURRENT OF "LIFE" PENETRATES PETER'S BODY!

NOW, NOW...IT MUST WORK! IT *MUST!* OTHERS BEFORE ME HAVE SOUGHT LIFE'S GREATEST SECRET...BUT I AM THE MAN WHO CAN FULLY SUCCEED!

SHORT MINUTES AFTERWARD, THE VITAL CHECK IS MADE AND...

BOOM BOOM BOOMTEDA BOOM...

I-I'VE *DONE IT!* HIS HEART BEATS ON... IN A BODY OF *DEAD* NERVES AND SINEWS!

THAT NIGHT, THE RESEARCHER'S "MIRACLE" BEGINS...

NERVES, SINEWS...AND A HEART THAT CANNOT DIE! I SHALL HAVE ALL THREE OF THEM...I SHALL BE THE *FIRST* MAN THAT DEATH CANNOT PLACE A BONY FINGER UPON!

AND AFTERWARD...

HA, HA, HEE, HEE! NOTHING CAN KILL ME NOW... *NOTHING!*

BANG

NEXT MORNING, THE MAN WHO CANNOT DIE PONDERS DEEPLY BEFORE THE SCIENCE INSTITUTE!

WAIT, YOU FOOL...WHAT WORLDLY GOOD WILL ALL THE PLAUDITS OF SCIENCE BRING YOU! WITH MY GREAT GIFT I COULD BE RICH...NO BULLETS CAN KILL ME... NO ACCIDENT CAN END MY LIFE! YES... FIRST I SHALL ENJOY MY GENIUS TO THE FULLEST...BEFORE GIVING IT TO THE WORLD!

BANK

A BRAZEN FIGURE STALKS TO THE CITY BANK AND...

G-GREAT THUNDER! THAT MAN MUST BE MAD!

STOP! STOP OR I'LL SHOOT!

HA, HA!

EEEEEE!

H-HE DOESN'T FALL... A-AND I'VE HIT HIM HALF A DOZEN TIMES!

GUARD! GUARD! SHOOT THAT MAN!

FAREWELL, FRIENDS! THANK YOU FOR THE POCKET MONEY TO BEGIN MY NEW CAREER! HA, HA!

THUS, THE RACE IS ON! THE MAN WHO OUTRUNS DEATH DEFIES THE LAW OF LIFE!

I-IT'S IMPOSSIBLE... HOW COULD ANYONE LIVE THROUGH THAT CRACK-UP?

GOOD GRIEF! THAT CRASH WHILE HE WAS ESCAPING WOULD HAVE KILLED ANY OTHER MAN!

CITY BANK

SMOKE AND FLAME CANNOT SEAR LIFE FROM REED PERRY...

YIIII! T-THERE'S THE ARSON THIEF... B-BUT THE FLAMES AREN'T HARMING HIM!

NOR CAN KING NEPTUNE'S BLACK, COLD DEPTHS CAPTURE PERRY!

THE FOOLS ARE HELPLESS! HA! HA! SOON, ALICE, SOON I SHALL HAVE ALL THE WEALTH WE NEED! THEN I SHALL MAKE YOU TOO INVULNERABLE TO DEATH... AND WE SHALL LIVE THROUGH ETERNITY TOGETHER WITHOUT A CARE!

POLICE

NOR CAN THE SHEER PRECIPICE THAT THREATENS MORTAL MAN DESTROY HIM!

I-IT WAS GHASTLY... H-HE SNATCHED THE WEEK-END RECEIPTS AND... AND PLUNGED OVER THE CLIFF! L-LOOK...

G-GREAT GLORY! H-HE MUST BE INHUMAN... WHAT A CREATURE!

HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

FINALLY...

AH, ALICE, IT'S DONE WITH! NO MORE HIDING IN THE DARKNESS AND ROBBING...I HAVE ENOUGH WEALTH NOW ...I SHALL COME AND GET YOU!

SHORTLY, PERRY SLIPS THROUGH THE BACK STREET AND...

ALICE! ALICE, DARLING... I'VE COME FOR YOU!

REED! IS THAT YOU... WHERE ARE YOU?

DEAREST...

EEEEEEEEEK!

IN STUNNED AMAZEMENT THE MAN WHO CANNOT DIE WATCHES AS...

HELP! HELP! A-A MONSTER... A FIEND IS AFTER ME!

G-GREAT HEAVENS! LOOK...OVER THERE!

SO ONCE AGAIN REED PERRY FLEES... BUT THIS TIME IT IS FROM THE WOMAN HE LOVES!

W-WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM? WHY DID ALICE CALL FOR HELP! T-THEY MUST BE MAD...ALL OF THEM *MAD!*

HEE, HEE! NO INDEED, REED PERRY, THEY ARE NOT MAD! IT IS *YOU* WHO HAVE GONE MAD!

YIIIIIII! W-WHO ARE YOU?

I AM YOUR ADVERSARY, REED... I AM THE ONE YOU SO SKILLFULLY CHEATED... I AM... *DEATH!*

DEATH! GET AWAY FROM ME! I...I BESTED YOU! YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH ME! I'M *SAFE* FROM YOUR ACCURSED CLUTCHES!

YES, REED... YOU ARE SAFE FROM MY CLUTCHES ...BUT YOU ARE A VICTIM OF YOURSELF! HEE, HEE... *WATCH!*

BEHOLD YOURSELF AS YOU *REALLY* ARE! THAT, PERRY, IS HOW *OTHERS* SEE YOU...YOU HAVE CHEATED ME BUT YOU SHALL ALWAYS REMAIN THE *LIVING DEAD!* HEE, HEE, HA, HA!

NO! NO! YOU LIE...YOU LIE!

LIES! LIES! LEAVE ME ALONE! I'LL PROVE YOU'RE WRONG!

RUN, PERRY, RUN! YOU CAN'T SEE YOUR UGLY MANGLED BODY FOR YOUR EYES ARE THE EYES OF THE DEAD... BUT, HEH, HEH, *OTHERS* CAN, PERRY!

THEN...

OH-H-H-H!

EEEEEEE!

I-IT'S TRUE ...I AM A *MONSTER!*

YIPE! A-A MONSTER!

AND LATER, A LONE THING OF UGLINESS ROAMS THE HILLS...

HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF YEARS ROAMING THE WORLD LIKE A HUNTED ANIMAL....I-I'VE *DESTROYED* MYSELF WITHOUT... *DYING!*

ONLY... ONE THING TO DO ...ONE THING!

YIIIIIIIII!

AND SOON AFTER, ANOTHER BURIAL IS ARRANGED AT THE LOCAL CEMETERY AS...

UGH! MR. PERRY IS CERTAINLY A FINE MAN TO PAY FOR THE BURIAL OF THESE UNFORTUNATES...BUT HOW ON EARTH THIS POOR DEVIL LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO REACH HIS APARTMENT TO DIE IS BEYOND ME!

NEVER SEEN A CORPSE LIKE THAT IN MY LIFE! WHY IT WAS SCARCELY MORE THAN A SKELETON!

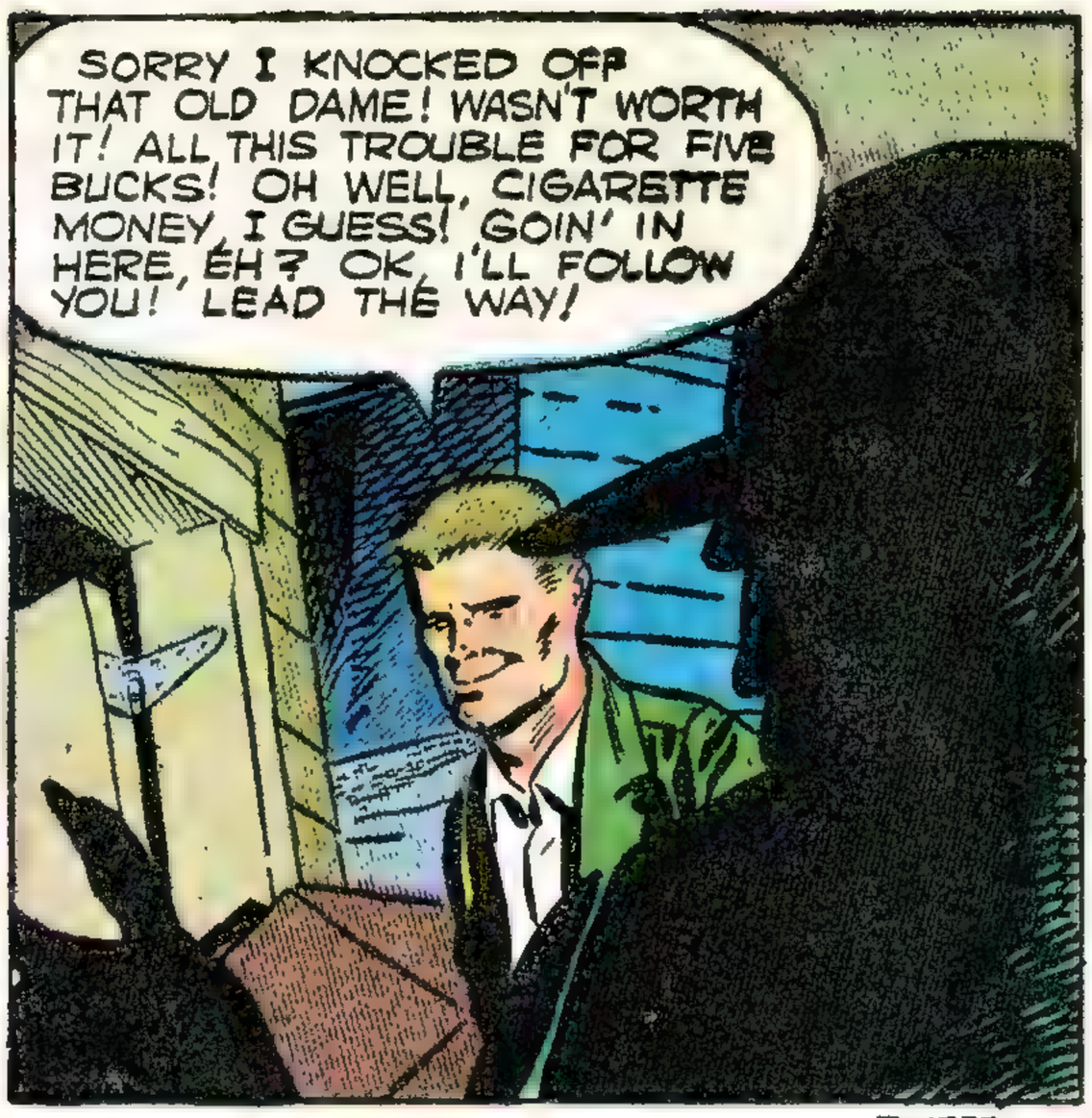
NOW, SIMMS, GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF! FORGET THAT STUPID NONSENSE ABOUT SEEING A GHOST LAST NIGHT AND GET TO WORK! THAT BODY HAS TO BE BURIED!

:SOB: :SOB:

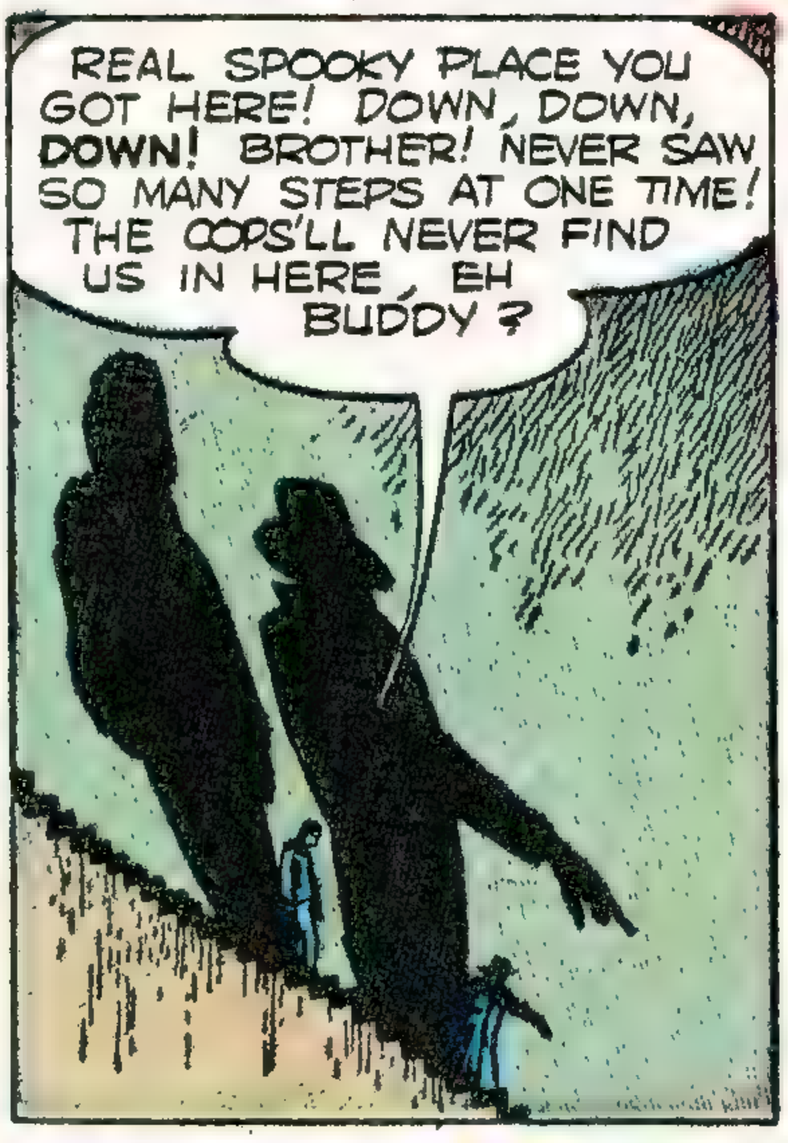
OF COURSE, SIMMS! YOU KNOW DEAD MEN DON'T COME TO LIFE!

YES, SIR!

THE GET-AWAY


SORRY I KNOCKED OFF THAT OLD DAME! WASN'T WORTH IT! ALL THIS TROUBLE FOR FIVE BUCKS! OH WELL, CIGARETTE MONEY, I GUESS! GOIN' IN HERE, EH? OK, I'LL FOLLOW YOU! LEAD THE WAY!

B-1777


REAL SPOOKY PLACE YOU GOT HERE! DOWN, DOWN, DOWN! BROTHER! NEVER SAW SO MANY STEPS AT ONE TIME! THE COPS'LL NEVER FIND US IN HERE, EH BUDDY?

The Unseen #13, February 1954. Artist: Gene Fawcette. Publisher: Standard.

Mister Mystery #18, August 1954. Artist: Charles Stern. Publisher: Stanley Morse.

TWEEET!
TWEET!
TWEET
TWEET
BLAST
WHOOOOEEEE!
A SHAFT OF LIGHT IS A LAST DESPERATE HOPE FOR ESCAPE!
LEMME IN!
LEMME IN!!
COSTUMES
YOU MAY ENTER... IF YOU LIKE!
I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT---BUT HIDE ME FROM THE COPS!
IF YOU MEAN THAT, I'LL HELP YOU!
2

I THINK YOU WILL MAKE GOOD BAIT TO FINISH MY COLLECTION!

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THAT WAX IS ONLY A COATING FOR *HUMAN FLESH!*

YOU HAVE ONLY TO LURE MY CUSTOMERS ON TO THIS TRAP DOOR---

---THE REST WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF!

EVERY DAY THE MURDERER LURES A VICTIM FOR THE GHASTLY COLLECTION. IT WAS ALL SO EASY TO BEGIN WITH---

PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE COSTUME ON A MODEL, MADAME?

I WOULD LOVE TO!

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS ON!

WHAT A GOOD IDEA. DO SHOW ME!

BUT BLOODY DEEDS CANNOT BE WASHED AWAY BY SLEEP!

YOU WILL JOIN US SOON, MY FRIEND!

THE NIGHTMARES CONTINUED. AND A WEEK LATER...

I CAN'T GO ON! THEY WON'T LET ME FORGET!

YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO ANY-THING! HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND ALREADY?

I'M NOT A WELCHER-- I'LL--I'LL GO ON!

HAVE YOU ANY PIRATE COSTUMES?

W-WAIT A MINUTE... I-I'LL G-GO AND S-SEE!

ONE OF THEM'S COME BACK! HE'S DRIPPING WAX ALL OVER THE FLOOR!

RUBBISH! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!

YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS AGAIN--- THERE'S NOTHING HERE!

THIS IS THE LAST STRAW. I'VE GOT TO STOP BEFORE I GO CRAZY!

I'M THROUGH—FINISHED—GET SOMEBODY ELSE TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK!

WE MADE A BARGAIN—

YES—

...AND THIS IS THE END OF IT!

BLAM! BLAM!

YOU WERE THE LAST ONE FOR MY COLLECTION! NOW I...CAN DIE... HAPPY...

HELP! SAVE ME! NO! NO!

EEE!

WE WERE EXPECTING YOU!

WELCOME!

YES, IT'S ALWAYS THAT WAY WHEN YOU JUMP OUT OF THE FRYING PAN... INTO THE FIRE!

THE END.

I don't always read comics, but when I do
I prefer Empire, a Tablet + 2 Women.
Stay reading Digital my Friends